

Paris holds 4 bombing suspects

PARIS (R) — Four Lebanese nationals are being held by police for questioning in a probe into bombings that killed 13 people in Paris last year, the interior ministry said Wednesday. One of five Lebanese picked up over the past 24 hours was released Wednesday. Police have made several arrests in Islamic fundamentalist circles over the past four months in connection with the bombings. But the interior ministry refused to comment on a French state-radio report that one of the Lebanese had worked at the Iranian embassy in Paris and knew the interpreter currently held up there apparently to test his loyalty on the bombings. Judge Gilles Boulogne, who wants to question Iranian embassy interpreter Valid Gordji, will also hear the Lebanese. France broke off ties with Iran last Friday over Mr. Gordji's refusal to leave the embassy which is currently ringed by police and elite sharpshooters to prevent him escaping. French police first thought Marxist brothers based in Lebanon were involved in the attacks, after a Middle East guerrilla group claimed responsibility. But investigators switched their attention to Islamic fundamentalist circles after the arrest of Tunisian Foad Ali Saleh and Lebanese-born French citizen Mohammad Mubadjer, who says he knows Mr. Gordji, according to police.

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Regent congratulates Egypt and Oman

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah bin Al Hussein, the Regent, on Wednesday sent a cable of congratulations to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak congratulating him on the occasion of the anniversary of the July 23 revolution. The Regent wished President Mubarak continuing good health and happiness and the Egyptian people further progress and prosperity. The Regent also sent a similar cable of congratulations to Sultan Qaboos of Oman congratulating him on the occasion of Oman's Renaissance Day. The Regent wished Sultan Qaboos continuing good health and happiness and the Omani people further progress and prosperity.

Rifai meets Fahoum

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Zaid Rifai on Wednesday received Mr. Khaled Al Fahoum, former speaker of the Palestinian National Council (PNC), who is currently on a private visit to Jordan. Earlier Lower House Parliament Speaker Akel Al Fayez met with Mr. Fahoum.

Palestinian cartoonist shot in London

LONDON (R) — A cartoonist working for a pro-Palestinian Kuwaiti newspaper was shot and seriously wounded in London Wednesday night. Police said an anti-terrorist squad was investigating the incident. Police said the man, believed to be a Palestinian, was shot in the London suburb of South Kensington near the offices of the Al Aquabas newspaper. The shooting took place less than a kilometre from where an opponent of the Iranian government was wounded in a car bomb attack on Saturday. Eyewitnesses said the man, in his late 40s, was shot at point blank range as he left the newspaper's offices with a woman.

Israeli court rejects Arab's bid to buy factory

TEL AVIV (R) — An Israeli court on Wednesday rejected a bid by a Palestinian businessman from the occupied Gaza Strip to buy a bankrupt barbed wire factory in Israel. Abdul Khalik Al Diks offered \$100,000 more than other bidders, but the court ruled that it would be a "security risk" if he owned Hamagad steel industries. "It's an example of racism," Mr. Diks told Reuters: I am not dealing at all with politics. I'm only a merchant."

Ethiopia urges armed struggle against S. Africa

ADDIS ABABA (R) — Ethiopia called on Wednesday for armed struggle against the white minority government in South Africa, saying experience in other parts of Africa had shown it was the only way to end colonial rule. Foreign Minister Berhanu Bayeh told a conference of foreign ministers of the 50-member Organisation of African Unity (OAU): "Armed struggle is the only effective way to bring about total liberation, as it has been proved in Algeria, Angola, Mozambique and elsewhere in Africa."

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U.S.-escorted Kuwaiti tankers clear Hormuz unchallenged by Iran

DUBAI (Agencies) — With crews at battle stations, three U.S. warships herded two reflagged Kuwaiti tankers into the perilous waters of the Gulf on Wednesday unchallenged by Iran.

Kuwait was preparing to receive the tankers sailing to its main oil port, where tight security has been in effect since bombing incidents last year. The supertanker Bridgeton and tanker Gas Prince were expected to berth on Thursday night or Friday morning after starting out on a 880-kilometre voyage up the Gulf escorted by the three U.S. warships.

Aircraft from the carrier USS Constellation outside the Gulf flew air cover overhead. Sandi-based airborne warning and control system aircraft, known as AWACS, also monitored the operation.

"They are moving fast in close convoy," reported one shipping source as the cluster of ships travelled at about 16 knots, the approximate top speed of the 401,382-tonne Bridgeton.

Both the Bridgeton, formerly

the Al Rekkah, and the 46,723-tonne Gas Prince, formerly the Al Minagish, ran up the American flag Tuesday off the United Arab Emirates. They have American captains.

The navy cruiser Fox led the convoy Wednesday, while the frigate Crommelin and the destroyer Kidd steamed nearby.

Iranian President Ali Khamenei vowed his nation would "strike blows to the ominous alliance" of the United States and Kuwait. Iran accuses Kuwait of helping Iraq in the Gulf war.

The Bridgeton and the Gas Prince entered the Strait of Hormuz, gateway to the Gulf, and had passed into the vital waterway by 4 p.m.

The convoy sailed about 19 kilometres from Iran's Larak Island, site of one of Iran's offshore oil shipping terminals, and 27

kilometres from Qeshm Island, where Iran was reported to have installed at least one of its three mobile anti-ship missile batteries.

Shipping sources said passage through the Strait of Hormuz was considered the most hazardous part of a mission which has provoked opposition in the U.S. congress and concern that the United States could become embroiled in the Gulf war.

But the convoy still had to pass through waters where Iranian Revolutionary Guards have mounted hit-and-run raids on tankers from islands and improvised offshore bases in the Gulf.

Their raids in high-speed boats have been the main threat in recent months as the toll in the "tanker war" — fought on the sidelines of the seven-year war between Iran and Iraq — climbed to 333 tankers and merchant ships attacked by the two sides.

The voyage through the strait brought the U.S. convoy within 20 kilometres of the Iranian

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Escort seen as test of U.S. resolve; Gulf states extend facilities to American ships; page 2

Gorbachev offers to scrap medium-range missiles

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev said the Soviet Union is ready to eliminate all its medium-range missiles in Asia if the United States does the same, the TASS news agency said Wednesday. TASS said the Soviet leader made the remarks in written replies to questions from the Indonesian newspaper Merdeka.

Analysts said the offer appeared to eliminate a key obstacle in current negotiations between the superpowers in Geneva on a major disarmament treaty.

The Geneva talks between the superpowers have been deadlocked for weeks. The two sides are negotiating a ban on medium-range and shorter-range rockets in Europe.

Under one formula considered by the superpowers, both sides were to retain 100 warheads, with the Soviet rockets bearing them to be stationed in Asia. It was not immediately clear what American missiles he was referring to, but there has been talk about the United States positioning missiles in Alaska that could strike the Asian part of the Soviet Union.

"In an effort to accommodate the Asian countries and take into account their concerns, the Soviet Union is prepared to agree to

eliminate all of its medium-range missiles in the Asian part of the country as well," Mr. Gorbachev said.

"In other words, we will proceed from the concept of a 'global double zero'," he added. His remarks were read on Moscow Television as well as being issued by TASS.

Mr. Gorbachev said the offer would not be linked — as Moscow has until now — with the withdrawal by the United States of sea-borne nuclear weapons from the area of Korea, the Philippines and the Indian Ocean base of Diego Garcia.

"We would like to hope, though, that if (the U.S. nuclear presence) will at least not grow," he declared.

Under one possible treaty text under discussion in Geneva, the Soviet Union might retain 100 medium-range missiles in Asia while the United States could base a similar number on its own territory.

But recently Washington has been urging a clearly reluctant Moscow to agree to the elimination of the Asian missiles as well.

In his remarks, Mr. Gorbachev made clear he envisaged dismantling of both medium- and shorter-range missiles under the "double zero option."

Turkish court drops spying charges against Ammarin

ANKARA (Agencies) — A military court ruled Wednesday that a Jordanian embassy employee accused of spying for Syria may not be tried because he has diplomatic immunity.

The court, opening the re-trial of Adnan Musa Suleiman Ammarin, accepted an earlier ruling of the military appeal court that he enjoyed immunity under the Vienna Convention on the protection of diplomats.

The same court sentenced Mr. Ammarin and a Turk of Iranian origin, Ali Kent, to 15 years each in prison in March for spying. The appeal court annulled the verdict on Mr. Ammarin on the grounds of diplomatic immunity while ratifying the prison term for Kent.

Jordan had protested to Turkey that Mr. Ammarin, an embassy translator, has immunity and Turkish press reports said the issue was raised by His Majesty King Hussein on a visit to Ankara last month.

Mr. Ammarin will remain in detention because of other cases against him, his lawyers said. Earlier this month he was acquitted of six others on charges of killing Jordanian embassy First Secretary Ziad Al Sati in 1985 but the prosecutor later said he would appeal, which means a re-trial.

Mr. Ammarin is also being tried on charges of involvement in an ammunition factory blast last year. The court decided to separate his case from those of other defendants, which legal sources quoted by Reuters said appeared to open a way for him to be returned to Jordan in the near future.

Mr. Ammarin faces life imprisonment if convicted on sabotage charges in the bombing of a munitions depot that killed seven firefighters in Kirkkale near here last summer.

Mr. Ammarin denied all the charges brought against him and testified in three separate trials that his pre-trial confessions were extracted under torture.

Defence lawyer Hussein Duman told AP that he expected a ruling soon on Mr. Ammarin's diplomatic immunity from the court handling the third case.

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Aide contradicts North testimony on shredding, page 2

Syrian and Soviet cosmonauts head for Mir station in space

MOSCOW (R) — Syria's first man in space and two Soviet cosmonauts speeded in a Soyuz spacecraft towards the Soviet Union's orbiting space station Mir on Wednesday at the start of a 10-day mission.

Lieutenant-Colonel Mohammad Faris, a 36-year-old air force pilot from Aleppo, and cosmonauts Alexander Viktorov and Alexander Alexandrov took off Wednesday morning in their Soyuz TM-3 vehicle from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Soviet Central Asia.

They are due to orbit the earth for two days before linking up with Mir, which has been manned since Feb. 8 by Soviet cosmonauts Yuri Romanenko and Alexander Laveikin and is planned to be the centre of the first permanently-operated space complex.

The three-man crew is expected to carry out scientific experiments with Romanenko and Laveikin before returning to earth on July 31.

The official Soviet news agency TASS said the Soyuz TM-3, one of a new generation of Soviet spacecraft which replaced the older Soyuz-T series, was launched at 5.59 a.m.

Soviet television did not broadcast pictures of the take-off.

Viktorov, the mission commander, said before the flight that it was "an historic mission, called upon to play a positive role in boosting friendship and cooperation between the Soviet Union and Syria."

Abdul Meguid ends Israeli visit; differences remain

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Egyptian Foreign Minister Esmat Abdul Meguid said Wednesday his visit to Israel was a success, but that he did not underestimate the differences of opinion among Israeli leaders on a proposed Middle East peace conference.

"It was a very, very useful set of meetings I had here," Mr. Abdul Meguid said before returning to Egypt after a three-day visit in which he discussed an international peace conference with Israeli leaders.

"There are differences of opinion," Mr. Abdul Meguid told reporters at Tel Aviv airport. "We have some real conclusions to be reached. I have to look to that with cautious optimism. But I also must be realistic not to underestimate the differences."

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, who also attended the news conference, said Mr. Abdul Meguid's visit was "very successful" and that it was "the first time we are meeting when almost the only subject is peace in the Middle East."

Added Mr. Abdul Meguid: "I agree with Mr. Peres that my visit

Iraq ready to implement U.N. resolution if Iran does same

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq said Wednesday it welcomed the recent U.N. Security Council resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in the Gulf war, which was approved by the National Assembly.

Baghdad Television said Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz was authorised to deliver a message to U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar expressing support for Monday's resolution.

Mr. Aziz earlier addressed a two-hour session of the National Assembly which ended with a unanimous vote declaring support for the ceasefire measure.

Security Council Resolution 598 called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and a return to pre-war boundaries. Iran castigated it, saying it failed to condemn Iraq as the "aggressor."

The spokesman said Iraq would welcome a visit to Baghdad by Mr. Perez de Cuellar so it could set out its position. He also said Mr. Aziz would travel to New York if needed.

However, INA, in a dispatch monitored Wednesday in Nicosia, Cyprus, reported that Iraqi forces mounted a "fierce raid" on Iranian positions in Iraq's Iranian-occupied Fa'o peninsula.

The agency did not mention casualties but it said the fighting Monday night, hours after the U.N. resolution was approved, led to the capture of large quantities of Iranian arms and equipment.

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'Concrete' French-Iranian talks to begin soon but no sign of end to blockades

PARIS (AP) — France and Iran are close to agreement on designating third-country representatives in each other's capitals, which will allow "concrete discussions" on the return home of embassy staffs, the Foreign Ministry said Wednesday.

There was no sign that the staffs of the French and Iranian embassies, blockaded in their missions for a week, were about to leave.

Wednesday was the departure date suggested by France after it broke relations with Iran on Friday, but a ministry spokesman said it was "very clear" no-one was going.

An agreement designating Italy and Pakistan as the respective representatives for France and Iran "is imminent," the spokesman said.

"From that moment very concrete discussions can start," he said. He spoke on condition he not be identified in keeping with French practice.

The two countries threw up police blockades around each other's embassies last Thursday in a stand-off over France's insistence that an Iranian embassy employee turn himself in for questioning about last year's Paris bomb wave.

Iran, in turn, demanded that French embassy First Secretary Paul Torri turn himself over to an Islamic court for trial on spy charges.

"It is clear that if France allows all members of the Iranian embassy in Paris to leave, we will do the same for the French embassy in Tehran," Iran's U.N. representative, Said Rajaei Khor-

assani said in an interview with French television.

Iranian embassy translator Valid Gordji has been in hiding in his mission for at least three weeks. France says Mr. Gordji does not have a diplomatic passport and, therefore, does not have diplomatic immunity. Iran contends he is a diplomat.

The ministry spokesman refused to comment on any negotiations concerning Mr. Gordji or Mr. Torri, saying only that contacts between French and Iranian authorities were continuing by telephone in Tehran.

He added that Italy's ambassador to Iran was given entry to the French embassy in Tehran Tuesday and that Pakistan's ambassador to France would be accorded the same visiting rights to the Iranian embassy in Paris.

Curfew imposed in Karachi after seven killed in riots

KARACHI (R) — Pakistani authorities clamped a curfew on parts of Karachi on Wednesday after a day of rioting in which doctors said seven people were killed and more than 30 injured.

A government statement said the indefinite curfew was to take effect at 11 p.m. in the riot-hit eastern districts of Landhi, Malir and Shah Faisal Colony.

Army troops began taking positions to enforce the curfew soon after the government announcement, witnesses said.

Hospital doctors said two policemen and an 11-year-old boy were among the seven killed in clashes between police and protesters.

Two policemen were shot dead and four stabbed Tuesday night in Landhi. Witnesses said the attacks provoked a revenge rampage by police in the area.

They said a group of angry policemen seized firearms at a police station, rushed to the riot area and opened fire indiscriminately.

The violence came on the fourth day of riots that erupted after two car bombs killed 73 people in Karachi last week.

Protests against the bombings first turned into ethnic clashes and later into anti-government riots after police arrested scores of people.

According to witnesses police have arrested at least 250 people in riot-hit areas in the past two days.

Police said one policeman was shot dead by rioters Tuesday night while on patrol in the industrial area of Landhi in eastern Karachi and another was shot on guard duty at the main gate of Landhi police station.

An assistant inspector and three policemen were also stabbed and wounded as violence raged late into the night in the Landhi district, police added.

Police sources said the deaths and stabbings angered colleagues at Landhi police station who picked up firearms and rushed to the riot area seeking revenge.

The sources said the men were restrained by senior officers and a magistrate who disarmed them and sent another police picket to the scene.

However, witnesses said the group had fired all around in the area.

Pro-Syrian Lebanese factions form new front

BEIRUT (Agencies) — A pro-Syrian front, grouping 13 Lebanese Muslim and leftist factions, was launched Wednesday and its first statement vowed joint action against Israel, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Lebanon's mostly Christian right.

The Unification and Liberation Front also called for the "integration" of Lebanon and Syria at the economic, social, educational, foreign policy, security and defence levels.

The alliance, the statement said, decided at its first meeting to form a joint military operations room for the confrontation with Israel and "its agents." This was a reference to Israeli-backed rightist militias.

The creation of the new front, the latest in a series of efforts to halt feuds among Syria's militia allies, was announced by Assem Kanso, leader of the Baath Party, the Lebanese chapter of the party that rules Syria.

Several Syrian-sponsored

fronts have been declared since the outbreak of Lebanon's civil war in 1975. However, they all were undermined by power struggles.

The new front also called for strengthening ties with the Palestine National Salvation Front, a Syrian-backed group that opposes PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's leadership.

The creation of the front was announced at a news conference attended by political and militia leaders at west Beirut's Carlton Hotel.

In addition to the Baath Party, the front groups the Shi'ite Amal militia, the Druze-dominated Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), the Communist Party and Sidon's People's Nasserite Organisation, as well as 20 independent personalities.

The front's 14-point programme attacked Mr. Gemayel and the anti-Syrian rightist "Lebanese Forces" militia, accusing them of aiming to divide the country and of involvement in the murder of

Prime Minister Rashid Karami on June 1.

"The downfall of the sectarian regime... has become the only solution," it said.

Political sources quoted by Reuters said formation of the front was a first step in bringing Mr. Gemayel's opponents together. It would be followed by a bigger "national conference" in Damascus.

Former President Suleiman Franjeh, a Syrian ally, was in Damascus on Wednesday to discuss the conference.

But diplomatic sources told Reuters they expected the new front to have little immediate impact and was mostly Syria's way of showing a firm response to the death of Mr. Karami, a key Syrian ally.

Syria stepped up efforts to form the front following Mr. Karami's death aboard an army helicopter and said it would not reopen talks with Mr. Gemayel on ending the war until Mr. Karami's killers and their backers

were punished.

So far only one man has been arrested as a result of the official investigation — a Christian army mechanic from the helicopter base who has been charged with facilitating the murder.

Mr. Gemayel's strained ties with Damascus have paralysed his government since January 1986, when he refused to endorse a Syrian-backed peace plan to grant Muslims more say in Lebanon's political system, which favours Christians.

The front's programme is similar to the 1986 plan, which most Christian leaders also rejected.

The front vowed to reorganise the fight against Israel with a joint operations room, stressed Lebanon's "Arab identity" and "distinguished" relations with Syria and called for the abolition of Lebanon's sectarian political system.

It called for complete cooperation between the Lebanese and Syrian armies. Syria has some 25,000 troops in Lebanon.

Aide contradicts North testimony on shredding

WASHINGTON (R) — White House aide Robert Earl has contradicted his former boss Oliver North who told Congress he shredded Iran-contra documents under the noses of two Justice Department officials probing the scandal last year.

In declassified excerpt of closed-door testimony Mr. Earl gave to the Senate and House of Representatives committees probing the Iran-contra scandal, the aide recalled a different episode than Col. North boasted of during his six days of testimony that ended last Tuesday.

Mr. Earl, who was an aide to Col. North at the National Security Council (NSC), said that last Nov. 22, three days before Col. North was fired from his post as North's office when two Justice investigators, Bradford Reynolds and John Richardson, arrived.

Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Richardson had been ordered by Attorney General Edwin Meese to search Col. North's files for documents relating to the scandal.

In his testimony, Col. North said he kept up a conversation with the Justice officials 10 feet (three metres) away while he weeded out Iran-contra documents and took them to the

shredder in his outer office. The Justice Department has denied Col. North's account.

Mr. Earl said the two Justice officials left to have lunch just as Col. North arrived.

While they were away, Mr. Earl said that Col. North reviewed documents "and I think found others that were suitable for the category that we had been looking for the day before." That category, he testified, was shredding.

He said Col. North left before the two officials returned from lunch.

Meanwhile Adm. John Poindexter ended five days of testimony in the Iran-contra scandal, severely rebuffed for harming President Reagan, but the former national security adviser said he left the hearing with "head held high."

In an emotional finale to the grueling public testimony, Adm. Poindexter got a hug and kiss from his wife after a 10-minute

long-lash from Congresswoman Lee Hamilton, co-chairman of the Senate House committee probing Mr. Reagan's worst political crisis.

Mr. Hamilton said Mr. Reagan "inflicted repeated and serious political wounds upon himself" because Adm. Poindexter kept important information on the scheme for him.

But Adm. Poindexter, 50, said he had acted to promote the national security of the United States.

His wife Linda, an Episcopal minister, who has worn her clerical collar and a crucifix during her husband's testimony, hugged and kissed him as he left the witness table Tuesday.

Before the drama ended, his lawyer shouted objections after one lawmaker asked if Adm. Poindexter recalled asking Justice officials to slow down a probe of reputed gun-running by Nicaraguan rebels known as contras and another suggested the attorney was coaching his client.

"I am not going to accept your accusation that I have coached my witness," the lawyer, Richard Becker, shouted. Mr. Hamilton, chairman of the House panel probing the Iran-contra affair,

Gulf Arabs extending facilities to U.S. ships

David B. Ottaway
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — After years of spurning American entreaties for closer military ties, the Gulf Arab states around Kuwait, in an unprecedented display of cooperation, are opening their ports, airfields and other facilities to help in case of the United States' naval escort of Kuwaiti oil tankers brings on armed confrontation with Iran.

The shift in attitude among the six countries of Arab Gulf Cooperation (GCC) has raised hopes among U.S. military strategists that the Arab leaders may agree to convert temporary U.S. access to their facilities into more permanent arrangements, possibly including a shore site for the forward headquarters of the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), now carried aboard a ship.

The command, set up in 1983, is the successor to the Rapid Deployment Force created to protect U.S. vital interests in the Gulf in the wake of the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Despite persistent efforts, U.S. officials have never persuaded any Arab Gulf state to host CENTCOM headquarters or provide it with any bases.

Worries about the war's course have spurred the Gulf Arab states to take these steps, administration and congressional sources say.

Saudi Arabia has committed its own five newly acquired AWACS surveillance aircraft for setting up a second aerial orbit over the southern Gulf that will be used to relay intelligence on Iranian military moves to U.S. warships escorting the 11 refueled Kuwaiti tankers.

The Saudis, who already provide air cover with their F15 fighters for U.S. piloted AWACS aircraft flying the "northern orbit" covering the upper Gulf from inside the kingdom, will also provide similar protection for the AWACS in the south.

The Saudis also have offered their four U.S.-made minesweepers to hunt for mines Iran may lay in the northern Gulf to damage American warships or the U.S.-flagged Kuwaiti tankers.

Saudi ports, airfields and hospitals are expected to be made available in emergencies to U.S. ships and aircraft.

Bahrain: Home port of the USS La Salle, flagship of the six-vessel U.S. Middle East Force stationed in the Gulf, Bahrain has expanded harbour facilities in the city of Manama available under a lease arrangement to accommodate the additional three warships being sent to help carry out the escort mission.

Some U.S. military planners are hopeful that if the United States carries out its escort mission successfully and gains Arab confidence, Bahraini authorities will allow CENTCOM to move its forward headquarters, now on the La Salle, into facilities ashore in Manama.

United Arab Emirates: In a major concession to the U.S., the federation of seven sheikhdoms has agreed, reportedly under heavy Saudi pressure, to allow the U.S.-Saudi "southern orbit" AWACS to operate over its territory, despite likely Iranian ire.

It also has agreed to "over-flights" of its territory by U.S. aircraft, apparently in case a U.S.-operated AWACS is used or U.S. aircraft go into action from carriers stationed just outside the Gulf.

Kuwait: In the region's most radical shift from a standoff policy, Kuwait, which once rarely allowed port visits from U.S. warships, now offers regular port access to U.S. escort warships and military protection to all U.S.-flagged ships within its territorial waters.

Oman: The only Gulf Arab state to have signed an access agreement with the United States as far back as 1980, Oman has agreed to increased use of its U.S.-upgraded ports and airfields by U.S. warships and aircraft supporting the escorts.

Qatar has never played any significant role in the Arab Gulf Council's defences or been asked to provide any military support to CENTCOM or the U.S. Middle East Force. U.S. officials have given no indication Qatar will play any role in the escort plan.

Israel radio continues strike

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli government radio broadcasts remained off the air for the second successive day Wednesday because of a strike by journalists demanding more pay, officials of Voice of Israel said.

U.S. escort destroyer was ordered by the shah

WASHINGTON (R) — One of the U.S. warships heading to Gulf Wednesday was originally built for the late shah of Iran.

The destroyer Kidd was taken over by the U.S. navy when the shah was overthrown by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1979. U.S. navy officers nickname it an "Ayatollah class" warship.

The ship is one of four guided missile destroyers ordered by the shah but never delivered.

The Kidd, Callaghan, the Scott and the Chandler, the only four warships of their kind and officially called Kidd-class destroyers, were launched in 1979 and 1980 in Mississippi.

The Kidd is part of an armada of U.S. warships protecting Kuwaiti tankers from Iranian attack in the Gulf.

Navy officers praise Kidd-class ships for their ship, submarine and aircraft-fighting abilities.

The Kidd is 150 metres long and carries an array of electronic equipment, two helicopters, Harpoon anti-air and standard anti-aircraft missiles. It also has rapid-fire Phalanx 20 mm guns to deal with sea-skimming missiles at close range.

The U.S. Wednesday began escorting the supertanker Bridgeton and the gas carrier Gas Prince through the Gulf.

Soviet diplomats leave Israel without prior notice

TEL AVIV (AP) — Three of eight Soviet diplomats who arrived in Israel 10 days ago left on Tuesday without explanation but were expected back later this week, a spokesman for the delegation said Wednesday.

The diplomats are the highest-ranking Soviet officials to visit since the Kremlin broke ties with Israel during the 1967 Middle East war.

Alexander Onia, a spokesman for the Finnish embassy in Tel Aviv which is hosting the Soviets, refused to say where the delegates went or why they left, except to say they did not return to Moscow.

Mr. Onia, reached by telephone, said that among those who left was delegation leader Yevgeny Antipov. Mr. Onia did

not identify the others.

"All I can tell you is they left yesterday. They didn't return to Moscow and they may be back tomorrow," Mr. Onia added and refused to elaborate.

Israel Army Radio reported Tuesday night that the delegates had flown to Cyprus, and quoted them as saying they would return to Israel in a few days.

When they arrived on July 12, the Soviets said they would stay in Israel at least three months to survey Russian Orthodox Church property and to look into the status of about 2,500 Soviet passport holders who live here.

Mr. Antipov told the Associated Press on July 18 that he expected to leave Israel in 10 days but that he would be replaced by another diplomat.

Arab professor seeks Israeli court ruling on free speech

NABLUS, Al Najah — University Professor Saeb Erakat, sentenced last week for incitement, says he will pursue an appeal to the high court of justice to seek a definition of the limits of free speech in the territories.

The Nabulus military court has imposed an eight-month suspended sentence on Prof. Erakat and fined him 10,000 New Israeli shekels for an article in the Al Najah newsletter last year in which he called on Palestinians to "endure, reject and resist" Israeli

occupation. Prof. Erakat's lawyers had argued in court that resistance could take non-violent forms, and said the charges violated their client's freedom of speech. Their appeal to the high court was made after Prof. Erakat's conviction in April.

In a reply to the high court, this month, the state attorney's office said free speech could be limited in areas under military rule. The case is still pending — The Jerusalem Post.

Gulf escort seen as test of U.S. resolve

By Tim Carrington and Gerald F. Seib

WASHINGTON — On the eve of its launch, the seemingly simple Gulf escort plan has mushroomed into one of the riskiest, highest-profile tests of American resolve the Reagan administration has undertaken.

The plan already has stirred dangerous passion inside Iran, and terrorism or other violence against the U.S. may well result. Washington has some ideas about how to respond, but Iran isn't another Libya or Grenada that would be easy to hit and forget. Moreover, any armed clash could close the very strategic "opening" to Tehran that enticed the Reagan administration into the Iran-contra affair in the first place and perhaps even draw the Soviet Union further into the Gulf.

Administration officials don't play down the importance the tanker plan has taken on. "The initiative... has to show that we're willing when conditions dictate to accept the burdens of a superpower," says Richard Armitage, the assistant secretary of defence for international security affairs.

Judith Kipper, a Middle East scholar at the Brookings Institution, summarises the challenge more bluntly: "If we blow this one, we won't be a superpower anymore."

With the U.S. reputation in the Middle East battered by the Iranian arms fiasco and the earlier failed peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, even the administration's critics don't want the U.S. to back away.

Yet the plan is fraught with risk: U.S. ships face the threat of attack from Iranian mines and speedboats that are hard to detect. In addition, some officials worry about terrorist attacks against U.S. business and military outposts in the Gulf area.

"You must retaliate or you have no credibility, even though by retaliating you are drawn further in and by retaliating you are taking actions we studiously avoided earlier in the administration," says Nicholas Veliotis, who was the assistant secretary of state for the Middle East in the first years of the Reagan presidency. — The Wall Street Journal.

TV & RADIO

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77111-19

PROGRAMME ONE

15:30 Koran
15:50 Programme Review
16:20 Cartoons
16:30 Children's programmes
16:50 Children's Scientific programme
17:15 Butterfly Island
17:45 English series
18:15 Arabic series
19:10 Health and Life (Arabic)
19:20 Local News report
19:30 Programme review
20:00 News in Arabic
20:40 Arabic series
21:30 Local content programme
22:30 Arabic film
23:00 News summary in Arabic
23:10 Arabic film contd.

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Rue Carnot
18:30 Le chance aux chansons
19:00 News in French
19:15 French varieties
19:30 Country Music
19:45 Varieties
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 My Husband and I (Comedy)
21:00 Master Work
21:10 Rags to Riches
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature film: "Night King"

RADIO JORDAN

855 KHz. AM & 99 MHz. FM & partly on 950 KHz. SW
Tel: 77111-19

07:00 Light Music
07:30 Newsweek
08:00 Morning Show
08:30 News Summary
09:05 Morning Show Contd.
10:00 Country Music
11:00 Hittville: The story of Motown
12:00 News Summary
12:30 Newsweek
13:05 News Summary
13:30 News Bulletin
14:00 News Bulletin
14:30 News Bulletin
15:00 Concert Hour
16:00 News Summary
16:30 Old Favourites
17:00 30-minute Theatre
17:30 Pop Session
18:00 News Summary
18:30 Special Feature
18:30 Music

VOICE OF AMERICA

MW 120 & SW 720, 955, 11740, 11925 and 15210 Hz

06:00 News 06:10 Newsline 06:30 VOA Morning 06:40 Newsline 06:50 Newsline 07:00 Newsline 07:10 Newsline 07:20 Newsline 07:30 Newsline 07:40 Newsline 07:50 Newsline 08:00 Newsline 08:10 Newsline 08:20 Newsline 08:30 Newsline 08:40 Newsline 08:50 Newsline 09:00 Newsline 09:10 Newsline 09:20 Newsline 09:30 Newsline 09:40 Newsline 09:50 Newsline 10:00 Newsline 10:10 Newsline 10:20 Newsline 10:30 Newsline 10:40 Newsline 10:50 Newsline 11:00 Newsline 11:10 Newsline 11:20 Newsline 11:30 Newsline 11:40 Newsline 11:50 Newsline 12:00 Newsline 12:10 Newsline 12:20 Newsline 12:30 Newsline 12:40 Newsline 12:50 Newsline 13:00 Newsline 13:10 Newsline 13:20 Newsline 13:30 Newsline 13:40 Newsline 13:50 Newsline 14:00 Newsline 14:10 Newsline 14:20 Newsline 14:30 Newsline 14:40 Newsline 14:50 Newsline 15:00 Newsline 15:10 Newsline 15:20 Newsline 15:30 Newsline 15:40 Newsline 15:50 Newsline 16:00 Newsline 16:10 Newsline 16:20 Newsline 16:30 Newsline 16:40 Newsline 16:50 Newsline 17:00 Newsline 17:10 Newsline 17:20 Newsline 17:30 Newsline 17:40 Newsline 17:50 Newsline 18:00 Newsline 18:10 Newsline 18:20 Newsline 18:30 Newsline 18:40 Newsline 18:50 Newsline 19:00 Newsline 19:10 Newsline 19:20 Newsline 19:30 Newsline 19:40 Newsline 19:50 Newsline 20:00 Newsline 20:10 Newsline 20:20 Newsline 20:30 Newsline 20:40 Newsline 20:50 Newsline 21:00 Newsline 21:10 Newsline 21:20 Newsline 21:30 Newsline 21:40 Newsline 21:50 Newsline 22:00 Newsline 22:10 Newsline 22:20 Newsline 22:30 Newsline 22:40 Newsline 22:50 Newsline 23:00 Newsline 23:10 Newsline 23:20 Newsline 23:30 Newsline 23:40 Newsline 23:50 Newsline 24:00 Newsline

FOR FRIDAY

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77111-19

PROGRAMME ONE

10:30 Koran
10:50 Programme Review
11:20 Cartoons
11:30 Children's programmes
11:50 Children's Scientific programme
12:15 Butterfly Island
12:45 English series
13:15 Arabic series
14:10 Health and Life (Arabic)
14:20 Local News report
14:30 Programme review
15:00 News in Arabic
15:40 Arabic series
16:30 Arabic film
17:00 News summary in Arabic
17:10 Arabic film contd.

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 French film: Les complètes came-
18:10 News in French
18:30 Ajourné fait on France
19:00 News in Hebrew
19:10 News in Hebrew
19:30 News in Arabic
20:00 The Cosby show
21:10 Falcon Crest
22:30 News in English
22:30 IF Tomorrow Comes (mini series)

RADIO JORDAN

855 KHz. AM & 99 MHz. FM & partly on 950 KHz. SW
Tel: 77111-19

07:00 Light Music
07:30 Newsweek
08:00 Morning Show
08:30 News Summary
09:05 Morning Show Contd.
10:00 Country Music
11:00 Hittville: The story of Motown
12:00 News Summary
12:30 Newsweek
13:05 News Summary
13:30 News Bulletin
14:00 News Bulletin
14:30 News Bulletin
15:00 Concert Hour
16:00 News Summary
16:30 Old Favourites
17:00 30-minute Theatre
17:30 Pop Session
18:00 News Summary
18:30 Special Feature
18:30 Music

WHAT'S GOING ON

TODAY'S EVENTS

EXHIBITIONS

* Paintings exhibition by Refat Al Hattari at the French Cultural Centre (until July 25).

* A photographic exhibition by Zohrab at the Royal Cultural Centre (until July 25).

* Plastic art exhibition at the University of Jordan.

* "On Golden Pond" at 7:00 p.m. Thursday at the American Centre.

Thursday 23/7/87

9:11 — Inman Darwish Sing Group Egypt

* Sound & Light: 8:30 — Children's Play: Window Tree 9:30-10:30 — Royal Jordanian Folk Troupe

* Antenna Steps: 9:30-11 — The Moroccan Al-Rabat Andalusian Songs

* Forum: 6:7 — Jordan Armed Forces Band 7:30-9 — Local Folk Groups 9:11 — China Acrobatic Troupe

Friday 24/7/87

* Sound & Light: 8:30 — Children's Play: Butterflies 9:30-10:30 — Radio Jordan Music & Songs

* Antenna Steps: 9:30-11 — Polish Puppet Theatre Troupe 6:7 — Jordan Armed Forces Band 7:30-9 — Local Folk Groups

11:05 — Listeners' Choice 12:00 — News Summary 12:05 — Listeners' Choice 12:30 — Country Music 13:00 — News Summary 13:05 — Country Music 14:00 — News Bulletin 14:10 — News Bulletin 14:30 — News Bulletin 15:00 — In Concert 16:00 — News Summary 16:05 — Instruments 16:30 — Old Favourites 17:00 — News Summary 18:00 — In Concert 18:05 — News Summary 19:00 — Newsweek 19:30 — Date with a Star 20:00 — 30 Years of American Top Ten hits

BBC WORLD SERVICE

639, 720, 1323 KHz

07:00 Newsweek 07:30 Country Style 07:45 Reflections 07:50 Financial News 08:00 World News 08:20 24 Hours: News Summary 8:30 Keep to the Path 08:45 The World Today 09:00 Newsdesk 09:30 Meridian 10:00 World News 10:20 24 Hours: News Summary 10:30 Write on... 10:45 Merchant Navy Programme 11:00 World News 11:30 Reflections 11:45 Music Times Past 12:00 Good Friday Meditation 12:30 World News 12:50 British Press Review 13:15 The World Today 13:30 Financial News 13:45 The Woman Who Rode Away 13:50 News Summary: Soundtracking 13:55 Merchant Navy Programme 13:58 Business Matters 14:00 World News 14:05 News About Britain 14:15 Sportsweek 14:30 Meridian 15:00 Radio Newsweek 15:15 Jazz for the Asking 15:45 Sports

CULTURAL CENTRES

Royal Cultural Centre... Tel. 6610267

American Centre... 644371

American Cultural Library... 641520

British Cultural Centre... 6361078

French Cultural Centre... 637009

Goethe Institute... 641993

Soviet Cultural Centre... 644203

Spanish Cultural Centre... 624049

Arabic Cultural Centre... 63977

Haya Arts Centre... 665195

Husseini Youth City... 667816

Y.W.C.A. ... 664251

Y.W.M.C.A. ... 664251

Univ. of Jordan Library... 843555

SERVICE CLUBS

The Amman Lions Club. Meetings every first and third Wednesday at the Regency Palace Hotel, 7:30 p.m.

Lions Philadelphia Club. Meetings every second and fourth Wednesday at the Amman Hotel, 7:30 p.m.

Philadelphia Rotary Club. Meetings every Wednesday at the Holiday Inn, 6:45 p.m.

Rotary Club. Meetings every Tuesday at the Intercontinental Hotel, 2:00 p.m.

Royal Automobile Club. Jabel Amman, Eighth Circle, Tel. 816334, 817534.

CHURCHES

St. Joseph Church (Roman Catholic) Jabel Amman, Tel. 624990.

Church of the Annunciation (Roman Catholic) Jabel Lubweidbeh, Tel. 661757.

Terraviva Church (Roman Catholic), Jabel Lubweidbeh, mass in Italian language, meet every Saturday at 5:30 p.m. Tel. 622365.

Church of the Annunciation (Greek Orthodox) Abadi, Tel. 623541.

Anglican Church (of the Redeemer) Jabel Amman, Tel. 625383.

Armenian Catholic Church Ashrafieh, Tel. 771531.

Armenian Orthodox Church Ashrafieh, Tel. 772561.

St. Ephraim Church (Syrian Orthodox) Ashrafieh, Tel. 771531.

Amman International Church (Interdenominational) meets at Southern Baptist School in Shamsani, Tel. 677534.

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08) 532005, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS ROYAL JORDANIAN FLIGHTS (Terminal 1)

10:30 Kuwait (RJ)
10:50 Dhahran (RJ)
11:00 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
11:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
11:30 Jeddah (RJ)
11:45 London (RJ)
12:00 New York, Vienna (RJ)
12:15 Cairo, Agaba (RJ)
12:30 Jeddah (RJ)
12:45 Dhahran (RJ)
12:50 Paphos, Athens (RJ)
13:00 Rome (RJ)
13:15 Baghdad (RJ)

OTHER FLIGHTS (Terminal 2)

12:00 Bucharest (RO)
12:25 Kuwait (RJ)
13:20 Cairo (MS)
13:30 Muscat, Doha, Bahrain (GF)
14:35 Kuwait (KU)
15:15 Istanbul, Ankara (RJ)
16:10 Riyadh (SV)
17:30 Baghdad (IA)
19:10 Frankfurt (LH)
19:20 Amsterdam (KL)
20:40 Zurich, Larnaca (SR)
20:40 Paris (AF)

DEPARTURES ROYAL JORDANIAN FLIGHTS (Terminal 1)

11:45 Paphos, Rome (RJ)
12:00 Vienna, New York (RJ)
12:30 Athens (RJ)
12:45 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
13:00 Frankfurt, London (RJ)
13:15 Brussels, Paris (RJ)
13:30 Agaba, Cairo (RJ)
20:35 Kuwait (RJ)
20:45 Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
20:50 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:00 Baghdad (RJ)
21:30 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
22:30 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)
23:00 Bangkok (RJ)
02:15 Cairo (RJ)

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be

NEWS IN BRIEF

Princess Wijdan opens art exhibition

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Highness Princess Wijdan Ali Wednesday opened an exhibition of plastic arts at the University of Jordan within the university's celebrations marking its golden jubilee. On display at the week-long exhibition are 130 art work pieces. Some 170 university students took part in the exhibition. Princess Wijdan toured the exhibition and met with participants.

Dentists group heads for West Bank

AMMAN (Petra) — President of the Jordanian Dentists Association (JDA), Dr. Walid Maraqa, left Amman Wednesday for the West Bank at the head of a JDA delegation to take part in a "Scientific Day" which is sponsored by the JDA branch in the occupied territories. The event, to be held in Jerusalem Friday, will involve West Bank dentists who will be discussing a host of questions related to the dentistry profession. Dr. Maraqa and the accompanying team will study the needs of the JDA branch in the West Bank and the general dental health condition of the Arabs under Israeli rule.

Gaza pilgrims arrive in Jordan

SOUTH SHUNEH (J.T.) — A 2,080-member group from the occupied Gaza Strip arrived here Wednesday across the King Hussein Bridge on their way to perform this year's pilgrimage in Mecca. The group was greeted by officials from the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. They are being put up at the special lodging for pilgrims at a site near South Shuneh. The pilgrims will be making the trip to Saudi Arabia by land and will be joining some 18,000 Jordanian pilgrims at the holy sites for the religious rites that culminate with Eid Al Adha (Feast of the Sacrifice), most likely beginning Aug. 5.

JUST begins application process

IRBID (Petra) — The Jordanian University of Science and Technology (JUST) announced Wednesday that it will start accepting applications Saturday, a process which will continue until Aug. 15. It said in a statement that all applications should be sent through post offices. The announcement said that students with an average mark of 80 per cent can apply for enrollment at the university's faculties except those applying for joining the nursing college. Apart from nursing, the university is open now for engineering, pharmacy, dentistry and medicine.

Crack PSD units graduate

SOUTH SHUNEH (Petra) — A ceremony was held at Kufrein military camp Wednesday for the graduation of a batch of crack units of the Public Security Department (PSD). The graduates performed military exercises. After speeches on the occasion, Lt. Gen. Abdul Hadi Al Majali, PSD director general, distributed cups and awards to those who excelled in their performance.

North Yemen to buy cement

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Cement Factories Company (JCFC) has signed an agreement with a North Yemeni corporation concerned to export 200,000 tonnes of Jordanian cement to North Yemen. JCFC Director General Khalid Al Thabari said. Dr. Thabari announced this on Wednesday upon his return from Sana'a, North Yemen, after taking part in the two-day meetings of the Arab Union of Cement and Building Materials held there on July 12. He added that the agreement is expected to be put into force during the next few weeks.

2 saved from sewer

IRBID (J.T.) — Two Egyptian workers were rescued Wednesday by civil defence men after they had fallen into a manhole in the city's sewer system.

Ramadan Zayoud, 32, and Rajab Issa, 27, were both picked up from the sewers after they fell into the hole, when the earth gave way from under them. They were buried by dirt and rocks, according to a civil defence spokesman.

He said that the two men fell

into a four metre deep manhole and were cut off from oxygen, but were saved when civil defence men passed to them oxygen pipes inside the sewers which saved their lives.

Only after the stones and dirt were removed from the pit the two men were taken out safely, the spokesman added.

He said that the two workers were rushed to Princess Basma Hospital for treatment. Their condition was described as fair.

1st int'l motor show in Mideast to be held

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Writer

AMMAN — At least 57 car manufacturers and companies from Western Europe and the United States will participate in a 10-day international motor show to be held in Amman in July 1988, according to an announcement by the show's organisers Wednesday.

Representatives of the organisers, 'Alam Assayarat, a Jordanian Arabic language car magazine, told a press conference held at the Amman Plaza Hotel that the Ministry of Tourism supported the project, which is also being supported by the organisers of the International Essen Motor Show in West Germany.

The magazine's director, Mohammad Ayyad, said that the Royal Jordanian Falcons will put on an air display on the opening day of the car show and Jordanian folklore troupes will participate by providing variety programmes.

He said the international motor show would be the first ever held in the Middle East.

Under Secretary of the Ministry of Information Michael Hamarneh who addressed the conference said that his ministry will do its best to guarantee a fruitful and successful show.

According to Mr. Ayyad, the Ministry of Tourism has organised a three-day tour of historic and archaeological sites in Jordan for the representatives of the participating companies, which, it is hoped, will boost the country's tourism industry and help market Jordan's various attractions abroad.

A representative of the Essen show told the meeting that Jordan was chosen because it has good relations with European countries, it enjoys a central geographic position in the Arab World, and its touristic sites are attractive to European and American visitors.

Mr. Ayyad said that the show will be staged at the Al Hussein Youth City, but that work is underway for setting up a 15,000 square metre site for the car show, which will be held annually in the country.

Bank employees union to discuss dismissals

By Samir Hiyari
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The controversy generated by the summary dismissal earlier this year of bank employees by two foreign-owned banks in the Kingdom will be one of the subjects discussed at a meeting of the General Union of Bank Employees (GUBE) Friday, according to Mr. Hajdar

Rashid, GUBE's president.

He said the meeting, which will be attended by representatives of local and commercial banks in the country, is also scheduled to discuss other issues pertaining to the banking profession.

He said that the current attempts by banks to reduce benefits for employees will also be discussed by the meeting.

Less fortunate youth graduate from vocational training schools

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Labour and Social Development graduated Wednesday 56 students from its vocational training centres in Amman and Ruseifa, after they had completed a two-year training course in various trades.

Minister of Labour and Social Development Khaled Al Haj Hassan distributed diplomas to the graduates of the Wasfi Tal Martyr School in Amman and the Vocational Centre at Ruseifa.

Director of the Social Development Department in Amman Governorate, Mr. Mohammad Falah, told the ceremony that the programme is designed to less fortunate students and orphaned children aged between 12 and 18, enabling them to adapt to the needs of society and become useful, productive citizens.

These trainees produce at their workshop furniture used by the ministry, Mr. Falah said. The trainees, he added, have been trained in blacksmithy, dressmaking and maintenance of equipment.

According to a spokesman for the ministry, the Wasfi Tal centre provides training to 104 students while the Ruseifa training centre offers training to 104 students.

Art exhibition depicting beauty of flowers to open

AMMAN (J.T.) — Two women are holding an art exhibition using the theme of flowers at the Intercontinental Hotel's gallery from July 25 to August 6, 1987.

Hind-Lara Mango has an exhibition of 57 miniature pressed flower impressions. She has blended the colour and forms of flowers in a number of captivating pieces, ranging from lightness of "On the Beach" and "Model in the Wind" to the more weighty "Allah".

Tracy Barnum's watercolour paintings depict various flower arrangements in arabesque vases. Each painting beautifully blends the colours and shape of the flowers with the vases in shades that evoke the feeling of springtime.

Bilbeisi named as acting WAJ head, replacing Keilani

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government has decided to appoint Mr. Mu'tazz Bilbeisi, the Transport Ministry's under secretary, as acting president for the Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ), to replace Mr. Mohammad Keilani, who resigned as WAJ president earlier this month.

Mr. Keilani and Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) President Munther Haddadin resigned following reports confirming that water being pumped from the Deir Alla water project had been polluted by water from the King Talal Dam which experts said was unsuitable for domestic use.

The Zai water treatment plant in Deir Alla was designed to pump water after treatment and purification into the Amman area from the East Ghor Canal while the King Talal Dam reserve was intended for agrarian use. The mixing of the plant's water intake with water from the King Talal Dam, which is not suitable for human consumption, produced odor, taste and colour in water observed by the inhabitants of Amman.

The government suspended pumping water from the Deir Alla water project as of July 1, and commissioned a team of British water experts to carry out studies on all water resources in the Jordan Valley area.

The British team was called because earlier studies by local and foreign experts had reportedly failed to reach consensus on the safety of both the King Talal Dam water reserve and water from the East Ghor Canal for domestic use.

Mr. Bilbeisi's appointment came during a regular Cabinet session chaired by Prime Minister Zaid Rifal during which the Cabinet also appointed Dr. Radi Waqfi as Jordan's representative to the executive council of the Islamic Educational, Scientific

and Cultural Organisation (IESCO). Dr. Waqfi is also secretary general of the Ministry of Education.

The Cabinet, which reportedly has plans to create a water and irrigation ministry, did not name replacement for Dr. Haddadin. Such a ministry would involve reorganisation of authorities dealing with water resources in the Kingdom in order to centralise decision-making, avoid duplication of work and overlapping of responsibilities.

During Wednesday's regular session, the Cabinet also decided to include the Abu Nuseir Housing Estate, some 10 kilometres west of Amman, into the Greater Amman Municipality zone. The inclusion would entitle the estate to benefit from the services provided by the municipality.

The estate, which groups 3,500 housing units has been sold largely to government employees. A limited number of units were sold to the private sector, expatriates and army personnel. Beneficiaries have 30 years to pay for their units; they were exempted by the government from paying the down payment.

U.S.-escorted Kuwaiti tankers clear Hormuz

(Continued from page 1)

played along its coast have a range of 80 kilometres.

Reporters on board the U.S. navy guided-missile destroyer Kidd, which placed itself between the Kuwaiti tankers and any Iranian missiles, said the convoy had been ordered to go to the wartime footing of general quarters — the highest state of alert — as it passed through the strait.

Iran has warned Washington it would not hesitate to hit American ships in the Gulf and U.S. Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger has said the United States had the capability to respond to any Iranian attack — sea or air.

Iran's navy, which routinely checks ships entering the strait to make sure they are not carrying arms for Iraq, was active during the night but melted away several hours before the convoy approached, the sources said.

By mid-morning, one source said, Iranian vessels were "conspicuous by their absence." The Chinese-designed Silk-worm anti-ship missiles that Washington believes Iran has de-

veloped along its coast have a range of 80 kilometres.

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Scene from the children's play, "The Tree of Wisdom," performed at the Sound and Light Theatre all last week.

Children's play perplexes even adults

By Nermeen Murad
Special to the Jordan Times

JERASH — Shajarat Alhikmah, "The Tree of Wisdom," a local children's play which was performed throughout the second week of the Jerash Festival of Culture and Arts, received at best mixed reactions from its audience.

The fact that it was not a success was not in question, everyone agreed to that, but the disagreement was over why. In interviews conducted after the performance, some claimed that the language and the script were written for intellectual adults, able to analyse hidden meanings, if there were any meanings in the play.

The language was in classical Arabic; some people felt that there should have been a notice telling people to bring their dictionaries with them. That is to say the adults should have, the children had no chance.

A young woman in the audience told the Jordan Times that "The Tree of Wisdom" could never be a play for children, nor for adults. We may still be very far from reaching the level of intelligence and understanding that the director has reached.

The actors, the director and some less harsh critics, claimed



JERASH FESTIVAL
of Culture & Arts
11-21 July 1987

that the play would have been good had it not been for the many technical difficulties which the sound equipment played a large part in creating.

The play started with the appearance of a wicked magician on stage, singing a song that was interrupted by an old song by Um Kalthoum coming from radio waves picked up by the speakers. The voice was so loud that some people thought that it was written into the script. Then, strange sounds from the police wireless came over the speakers. During the performance, the magician's song tells people that he is the master of the world and that he rules it with fire and metal. Throughout the play, his power seems to lie in his ability to

control people's mind and make them respond to his commands.

The magician brings the people chocolate, drinks, toy cars, so that they would not have time to bother with using their minds on more important issues. All this effort is made to control a wise man in the play and his followers, his daughter, her lover, the doctor and the little birds in the tree. The wise man tries to fight these influences along with his followers.

This whole scene is supposedly played out in a forest. But the forest consists of only one tree and even that sheds its few leaves by the end of the play.

Somewhere near the end of the play, the magician is able to control the minds of the wise man, his daughter and her lover. But the birds escape the magician's power.

In the final scene the birds band together and fight the magician. When the others see them united, they wake from the power of the magician and fight along with the birds to destroy the magician.

The play was directed by Mr. Jabrael Al Sheikh, the actors were Shaies Al Nouaimi as magician, Khalil Mustafa as the wise man, Moughat Ezzat as the daughter's lover and Nadara Khalid as the daughter.

Jerash Festival Schedule for July 24-31

Place	Fri. 24/7	Sat. 25/7	Sund. 26/7	Mon. 27/7	Tues. 28/7	Wed. 29/7	Thurs. 30/7	Fri. 31/7
South Theatre 7-8								
7.30 - 8.30		Symphony Orchestra	Symphony Orchestra					
9 - 11	CARACALLA Sing. Group ECHO	CARACALLA Sing. Group ECHO		David Latham SHAKIR AL-NUMAN	David Latham SHAKIR AL-NUMAN	David Latham SHAKIR AL-NUMAN	David Latham SHAKIR AL-NUMAN	David Latham SHAKIR AL-NUMAN
7.30 - 11			The Moon Show Ballet Theatre	The Moon Show Ballet Theatre				
Sound & Light 8-9	Children's Play Better Film Dancing	Children's Play Better Film Dancing	Children's Play Better Film Dancing	Children's Play Better Film Dancing	Children's Play Better Film Dancing	Children's Play Better Film Dancing	Children's Play Better Film Dancing	Children's Play Better Film Dancing
9.30 - 10.30	Ballet Julem Music & Song	French Troupe Troupe	French Troupe Troupe	French Troupe Troupe	French Troupe Troupe	French Troupe Troupe	Local Music & Song Groups	Local Music & Song Groups
Artemis Steps 8-9	Polish Puppet Theatre Troupe	International Youth Musical Performance 8-9.30	International Youth Musical Performance 8-9.30	Indian Puppet Show	Indian Puppet Show	Indian Puppet Show	Indian Puppet Show	Indian Puppet Show
8-10								
9.30 - 11								
Forum 6-7	Jordan Armed Forces Band	Jordan Armed Forces Band	Jordan Armed Forces Band	Jordan Armed Forces Band	Jordan Armed Forces Band	Jordan Armed Forces Band	Jordan Armed Forces Band	Jordan Armed Forces Band
7.30 - 9	Local Folk Groups	Local Folk Groups	Local Folk Groups	Local Folk Groups	Local Folk Groups	Local Folk Groups	Local Folk Groups	Local Folk Groups

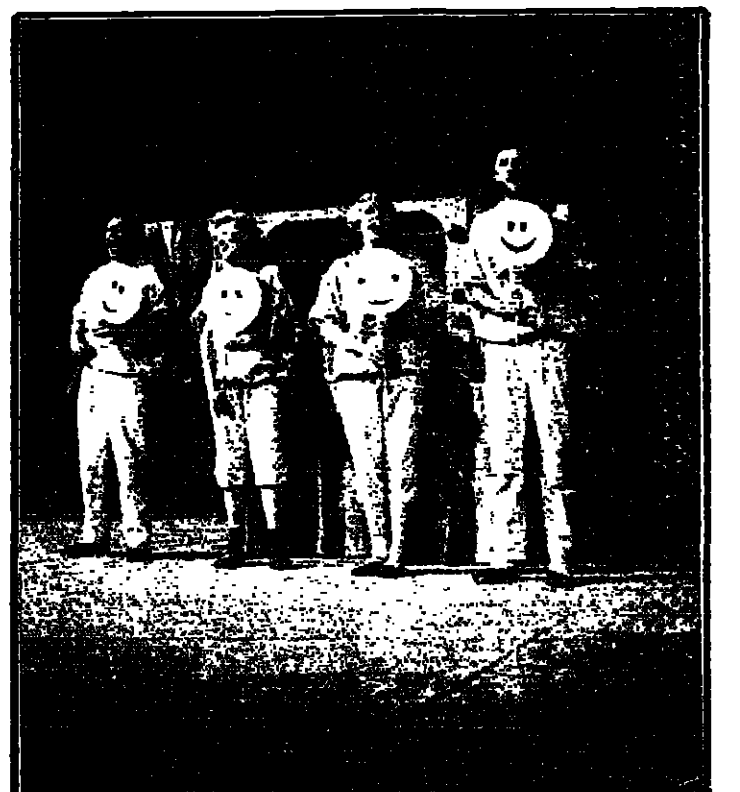
Photos by Yousef Al 'Ali



Lebanese singer Salwa Qatib and her accompanying singers light up the night in the performance of Lebanese Nights by Romeo Lakhoud.



Czechoslovakian folk troupe, Lucnica, exhibits the grace and beauty of the Slovakian culture at the South Theatre Monday and Tuesday.



Polish puppeteers put on happy faces at the Artemis Steps.

Jordan Times

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MAHMOUD AL KAYED

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Garbled signals from Iran

THERE are already several signals from Iran that it will deny official recognition to the United Nations Security Council resolution, passed Monday, but that it will move forward to accord a de facto acceptance of it. Having already charged that the presence of U.S. fleet in the Gulf is violating the fifth paragraph of the resolution which called on "other" states to refrain from taking actions that could worsen the conflict, Iran is using an important article in the resolution in its defence, and is, by implication, accepting at least some cardinal elements of the resolution. This is not to suggest that the legality of Monday's resolution is dependent on its acceptance by the parties to the conflict. The pronouncements of the U.N. Security Council are operative independently of the agreement of the immediate parties to whom the resolution is principally addressed. What makes this resolution on the Gulf unique is that it was drafted and adopted without seeking Iraq's and Iran's agreement to its terms and principles. In this context, there was an obvious departure from established U.N. Security Council practices which have hitherto involved direct consultation with the immediate parties to the conflict and have sought their consent to the preamble and operative paragraphs of resolutions. In this departure from established traditions and practices, the U.N. has taken an important step forward. There is no doubt that jurists and international lawyers will view the latest decision of the Security Council as a milestone in the positive and progressive development of international law. All supporters of the U.N. system will surely salute the Security Council for the positive innovations introduced to its practices and procedures.

We also think that Iran will abide in practice by the resolution because it has a vested interest in its implementation, at least on a partial basis. Iran has always sought to protect oil tankers en route to its ports to ensure a steady and continuous flow of its oil to international markets. Iraq is less dependent on free navigation in the Gulf because it uses a network of pipelines to export its oil to the world.

Most probably Iran will continue its offensives across the Iran-Iraq frontier but not large-scale military operations. Meanwhile, Iran will most likely cooperate with the independent international committee, provided for in the U.N. resolution to determine the responsibility for the start of the Gulf war, a principal point of contention for Tehran. This provision for an impartial investigation could provide the psychological breakthrough necessary to end the war. We anticipate that Iran's partial de facto acceptance of the resolution will be dominated by rhetorical rejection of some of the paragraphs embodied in the resolution. The Security Council therefore will be well advised to speed action on the impartial investigation to address a primary point of contention, that Iran has been insisting on for long time.

ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i: Iran remains defiant

REACTIONS to the U.N. Security Council resolution calling for an end to the Gulf war reflected the true desire of all nations and governments for peace, security and stability. All world governments welcomed the resolution, hoping that it will be implemented, except for Iran and its rulers who declared their outright rejection of the peace bid. It is natural to expect such a behaviour from a regime obsessed by the idea of war and its exploits and the lust to see more sufferings of the Iranian people. Iran is thus adopting a similar attitude like that of Israel vis-a-vis U.N. Security Council resolutions, scoffing at the international will and its decisions. Both Iran and Israel would not have adopted this attitude and pursued an aggressive stand towards their neighbours had they not been receiving unlimited aid and support from countries that continue to benefit from the continuation of the conflict. All reactions from around the world indicate that countries at large would like to see the new Security Council Resolution 598 implemented and sanctions and penalties imposed on Iran to force it to abide by the will and the decisions of the international community. We take hope from a statement from President Reagan who said that the United States aims at achieving peace; and in its endeavours, it will not take sides but will do its best to translate the resolution into real practice.

Al Dustour: King regrets U.S. stand

KING Hussein has reiterated the importance of convening an international Middle East conference to establish peace in the Middle East and said that the proposed conference was the only practical option for the achievement of a political settlement to the complicated problem. In an interview with a French magazine the King expressed regret over the United States attitude towards the proposed conference and with regard to its stand towards the Arab-Israeli conflict in general. He also voiced his regret over Washington's attitude towards the Gulf war and its double faced policies with regard to its relations with Iran and its sale of arms to that aggressive nation. King Hussein pointed to the deep frustration in the Arab World from U.S. policies due to such attitude, coming from a superpower which ought to abide by its principles and work towards establishing peace. It should be stated that Washington's policies have harmed U.S.-Arab relations and that all statements by U.S. officials which are not translated into practice can never improve these relations or help the cause of peace. King Hussein has outlined the clear, frank and genuine Arab orientation towards peace through an international conference which marks the first step in ending the Arab-Israeli conflict. The King also referred to U.S. ambiguous position as one that has contributed to the escalation of tension in the Middle East.

Sawt Al Shaab: Israel dismantles Arab institutions

ISRAEL'S inner cabinet has decided to take measures making it extremely difficult for the Arab-owned Jerusalem district electricity company to maintain its operations in the Arab territory. This decision reflects the Jewish state's aggressive attitude towards the Arab inhabitants and their interests and national aspirations. The decision is to be regarded as one more link in a long chain of malpractices against the Palestinians and their national rights, and is in line with Israel's standing policy of expropriating Arab property and evicting Arab inhabitants from their homeland.

How good is Thatcher's government to British Jews?

By Eric Moonman

The writer, who served as a Member of British Parliament for 10 years, is senior vice president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. His article is reprinted from the Jerusalem-based Israeli newspaper, The Jerusalem Post.

ON JUNE 11, Mrs. Thatcher won her third election in a row. The implications for the British public and for British Jewry in particular are likely to be significant, beyond the life of this present Parliament.

How has the election affected the Jewish community? The fact that there has been a drop in the number of Jewish MPs — five down from the number in the last Parliament, has caused much speculation and a little concern in the Jewish community. It's true that there has been a steady reduction in Jewish MPs since 1966-70, during my first term as an MP, when the figure was 46; but more important than the number of MPs is their particular attitude and commitment towards Jewish and Israeli affairs. There are those members who were born Jewish but take great pains to point out either that they have no affiliation to the community or were converted to Christianity. Even more significant, to my mind, than the reduction of the number of Jewish MPs, is the change in the political allegiances of the group that has been elected. They reflect the general trend of the community to move from left to right.

The numbers game does not help us to understand the subtleties of British politics. It is more important to assess the statements of the party leaders and their position papers on Jewish issues. In the manifestos there was virtually no mention of the Middle East conflict, let alone of Israel. The Tories reported quite correctly, "we have played a prominent part in bringing Israel and the moderate Arab states close to peace negotiations in the framework of an international conference." Labour took the line of being an "honest broker" between Israel and the Palestinians, pledging to support and protect the rights of both.

Israelis in Britain have expressed surprise that foreign affairs should play such a minor role in an election. The contrast with an election campaign in Israel where regional and international politics play such an important part, must be startling. Instead, in Britain we have a series of arguments expressing deep concern with the quality of domestic services. A leading Labour spokesman told me, "the fact that foreign affairs did not surface was not because we planned it that way, but because of the domestic issues (health, education and taxes)." In fact, in retrospect, he might have added that the one period in which Labour was really uncomfortable during the June campaign was when the debate focused on defence.

Two features of the British political system much admired in Israel are the constituency MP

concept and the "first past the post" principle. Yet the anomalies of our system are there for all to see. The Conservatives held their 43 per cent share of the vote and lost 17 seats overall. Labour put up its share from 28 per cent to 32 per cent and gained 21 seats overall, but has 40 seats fewer than it did in 1979. The Alliance dropped from 26 per cent of the vote to 23 per cent and finished with 22 seats, one fewer than in 1983.

Yet the Alliance of the Social Democratic Party and the Liberal Party continues to show little for having seven million supporters, except a deep sense of grievance. But the chance of either Conservatives or Labour making any commitment to proportional representation is remote — why should they help to create a third party challenge? I attended a number of political meetings during the election where PR was seriously discussed. At an Alliance meeting in Bury South (Manchester) for instance, a young man wanted to know how we would cope with the emergence in Parliament of the right and left-wing extremists which PR would inevitably bring. "As a Jew," he said, "I am not prepared to trust the so-called good sense of the people not to elect a member of the National Front."

There are, of course, ways of overcoming these hazards and the reply he got confirmed that a PR model based on the German system would ensure that parties not reaching 5 per cent of the electorate would not qualify for representation.

The General Election subcommittee of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, which I chaired, and which included representatives of Ajex, the Zionist Federation and Bipac, submitted a questionnaire to more than 2,000 Parliamentary candidates. The replies are still being analysed, but it is already clear that they provide an important profile of our friends in Parliament and of those who are not so friendly. More than 550 replies were received to questions on Israel, the defence of the Jewish community and shehita. In addition to the questionnaire, delegations of Jewish constituents met with many candidates throughout the country seeking their views on the same issues.

It is already apparent that a major task is required in informing and educating our new legislators. Mrs. Thatcher's government shows little change in the departments likely to affect Israel. Geoffrey Howe remains as foreign secretary and is joined by Lynda Chalker, a very keen advocate for Soviet Jewry, who takes the No. 2 job. On the opposition side, Denis Healey has quit foreign affairs which only mean an improvement. Dealing with the issue of shehita, Mr. Jopling has been replaced by Mr. Gummer. That, too, has to be better news. There is also David Mellor, a minister of state responsible for the Middle East, who will clearly be more open-minded than his predecessor, Timothy Renton. Mr. Mellor's speech to the International conference

on Soviet Jewry in London two weeks ago confirms the fine talent of this minister.

It may be a little unwise to speculate on exactly what government attitudes will be towards Israel and Jewish questions for the next four to five years of this Parliament. But the following observations are likely to be not too far off the mark.

There will be no shift in government policy away from Israel. Margaret Thatcher runs her own foreign policy whoever carries the portfolio. Her stamp throughout the past eight years on the Middle East has been consistent, constructive and understanding of Israel's position in a way no British prime minister has acted, with the exception of Harold Wilson. Her discussions recently with Israel's Foreign Minister Shimon Peres confirm her continued positive stance.

The Venice Declaration for an EEC initiative on the Middle East is dead. But I suspect efforts will be made to revive the corpse in one or other of the EEC countries. The EEC foreign policy, however, does not figure too highly on the prime minister's agenda, so Lord Carrington's brain-child is unlikely to get a hearing. Anyway, there is no demand within Britain to upgrade EEC affairs.

Shehita is one area which troubles the Jewish communal leadership. It is not a narrow issue of who eats what, but in recent years two separate groups of people, Animal Rights and the extreme Left, have campaigned against those who want to protect

the right to ritual slaughter. As Sir David Price, MP, said in his introduction to a recent Centre for Contemporary Studies briefing paper, "first, there are the new-style militant campaigners for animal rights who believe that the end justifies the means and are therefore all too ready to act beyond the law. Secondly, there are the militant racists who are equally ready to use any means to achieve their ends." These two elements add a new and disturbing dimension to the old debate on shehita which could take it outside the traditional pattern and rules of British politics. There are occasions when these two groups overlap in their aggressive stance on Jewish matters.

I believe Mrs. Thatcher will hold firm on the shehita issue because it would affect not only the Jewish community, but the one million Muslims who have a fast-growing voting potential.

The Conservatives look set for a comfortable period of office, though their radical first-year programme may run into rough times. The balance and style of power is changing in Britain. We have moved away from the welfare, supportive state into a popular capitalism. Many houses are owned, more shares are owned (one in five has stock), and there is more emphasis on privatisation, for instance in education and the health service. Mrs. Thatcher is directing the ship with greater verve and it looks, for the moment, as though there is no land in sight for the Labour, Liberal and SDP alternatives.

Rebels gain upper hand in Sudan's southern fighting

By Dalia Baligh
The Associated Press

KHARTOUM, Sudan — For the first time, Ethiopian-backed rebels may have gained the upper hand in the protracted civil war in southern Sudan. However, the fighting could continue for many years.

Army morale appears to have worsened during the current rainy season, which restricts army mobility while providing cover for the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army. This has contributed over the last nine months to the change in battlefield fortunes.

"Militarily, it looks like the SPLA is in a stronger position," said Peter Woodward, a lecturer at England's Reading University who has studied Sudanese politics for 20 years. "They're at their strongest yet," in the 4-year-old war.

In a telephone interview from England, he pointed to recent SPLA victories, the demoralisation of the army, disagreement among army leaders over war policies of Prime Minister Sadek Al Mahdi and the government's inability to keep the army supplied.

Members of Al Mahdi's government rarely comment on day-to-day fighting but vow in their speeches that the government will make war until the rebels agree to talk peace.

Nevertheless, the Sudanese press, among the freest in the Arab World since the ouster of the authoritarian President Jaafar Numeiri in 1985, has been filled with detailed reports of government defeats.

And a measure of government concern is a law being prepared that attorney general Abdul Mahmoud Saleh said will bar news media from reporting on the southern fighting without clearance from the army.

Despite the SPLA's advantageous position and government losses, Woodward said the rebels remain unable to win a military victory. He predicted the fighting could continue "for many years to come."

In Khartoum, several foreigners privy to military information from the south agreed to discuss the war on the basis of anonymity.

They said the government brought many of its problems on itself by overestimating its capabilities and underestimating those of the rebel movement. The latest example, they said, was the taking in late May of the southern garrison town of Jekaw, whose commander told SPLA radio that he had not been resupplied for 400 days. Jekaw is in the Upper Nile region, some 1,250 km northeast of Khartoum.

The sources noted increasing signs of the SPLA's moving ahead, including a 50 per cent increase of the number of guerrillas under arms to 30,000 and indications that the movement is winning the sympathy of more southerners.

Ethiopia is increasing its support to the rebels, both in hardware and logistics, such as the Ethiopian air cover provided for the attack on Jekaw, the sources said.

The army claimed that Cuban and East German ground advisers also participated in the battle for Jekaw, but the sources in Khartoum said they could not confirm that. One said, however, that East Germans are known to be at an Ethiopian army depot and training centre at Gambella, just across the border from Jekaw.

The sources said the SPLA in recent months moved toward controlling a 66 km strip of villages along the southern-eastern border with Ethiopia for attacks in the interior.

The government's latest setback was not a military defeat, but a political embarrassment: The July 7 abduction of three American teachers and a British nurse from a Christian college in a southern garrison town.

There remains no definite word on the fate of Americans Mark Nikkel, Steve Anderson, and Katherine Taylor, or Heather Sinclair, of Northern Ireland.

The SPLA has not claimed responsibility for the kidnappings, although the hostages were taken in an area largely under SPLA control.

The guerrillas control much of the south, an area larger than France, while the government spends an estimated one million Sudanese pounds (\$400,000) every day in trying to quell the rebellion.

That is a heavy drain on resources, considering that Sudan's foreign debt of around \$12 billion demands annual interest payments of \$800 million.

The SPLA rebellion, which started in 1983, is rooted in a similar war that ended in 1972 when then-president Numeiri negotiated an end to the war between the Muslim majority in the north and Christians and animists in the south.

But many southerners felt that pro-Western Numeiri reneged on his pledges by dividing the south into three regions and by planning to divert to the central government most profits from oil fields being developed in the south.

SPLA leader John Garang, an army colonel, went to the bush in spring 1983. The conflict worsened the following September when Numeiri decreed strict Islamic law throughout Sudan.

Garang does not advocate secession but wants a secular government giving southerners their full rights.

Despite peace overtures by the junta that replaced Numeiri in April 1985 and Al Mahdi's elected government that took power a year later, the fighting continues.

Although the army has superior firepower, the SPLA has the tactical advantage in the rainy season of guerrilla warfare in the bush. Its fighters use high grass as cover to ambush troops and attack garrisons, but washed-out roads immobilise the army's equipment and its aircraft are unusable during the monsoons, which end in September or October.

Sources say the army's morale is worsening because the SPLA has them on the defensive during the rains.

Iraq ready to implement U.N. resolution

(Continued from page 1)

Tehran would never accept the U.N. resolution but would pursue the war "until the elimination of the regime governing Iraq."

This did not mean Iran did not recognise the United Nations, only that it should act independently and not under U.S. pressure, the official Iranian news agency (IRNA) quoted him as saying in a speech at Ardebil, in Azarbaijan province.

Baghdad-based diplomats said the resolution satisfied Iraq's demand for a comprehensive settlement, while it ignored Iran's demand for Iraq to be held responsible for allegedly starting the war in September 1980.

Iran called the U.N. resolution worthless even before it was passed. Afterwards, it said the measure was "unjust" because it does not describe Iraq as the "aggressor."

But Said Rajaie Korassani, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, told the ABC television network Wednesday that Iran had not "yet given flat rejection to the resolution."

He also said it was not surprising Iraq responded favourably, as it has to past resolutions. "It is, after all, ... as if the Iraqis had drafted it," he claimed.

The U.S.-brokered resolution won the unanimous support of the 15-nation Security Council Monday.

Tehran Radio on Tuesday quoted Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati as saying Monday's resolution had positive points but was "not enough."

"If they even refrain from mentioning the name of Iraq as the aggressor then it means that they lack the courage to adopt a correct and just decision," Mr. Velayati said.

The resolution calls on Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar to "explore, in consultation with Iran and Iraq, the question of entrusting an impartial body with inquiring into responsibility for the conflict."

Iran dates the war from the night of Sept. 22-23 when Iraqi troops moved into Iran. Baghdad says the conflict started with border skirmishes engineered by Iran earlier that month.

Testimonies baffle hearings

(Continued from page 1)

Adm. Poindexter said Mr. Reagan wanted to pursue secret talks with Iran in the hopes of freeing U.S. hostages in Lebanon even as the Iran-contra scandal was unravelling last November.

Adm. Poindexter said he had shared Mr. Reagan's concern that contacts with a senior Iranian official, the so-called "second channel," be preserved and pursued.

"One of our concerns, both mine and the president's, was to preserve a possibility of getting out more hostages and to preserve the contact through the second channel."

He said the White House had contacted the Iranian official by telephone both before and after a Nov. 13 televised address on the Iran initiative by Mr. Reagan and a Nov. 19 presidential news conference.

But he did not say whether Mr. Reagan's desire to pursue talks with Iran, in hopes of winning freedom for American hostages held by pro-Iranian militants in Lebanon, would have involved additional shipments of U.S. arms to Tehran.

able to produce a pattern of representation that would be acceptable to Israelis.

Mr. Abdul Meguid told the Palestinians he had expressed strong dissatisfaction with the Israelis over living conditions in the occupied territories and stated Egypt's opposition to a new plan to pump large quantities of water from the West Bank to Jewish settlements.

Mr. Abu Rahme said they urged Egypt to lobby Israel to allow direct exports of agricultural produce from the occupied territories to the European Community. At present they are forced to go through Israeli marketing boards, which control prices and delivery schedules.

Abdul Meguid ends Israel visit; differences remain

(Continued from page 1)

"It was the first collective meeting with Egypt. That has a certain significance," said Gaza lawyer Fayed Abu Rahme, named in 1985 as a possible delegate to future peace talks.

He said Mr. Abdul Meguid expressed Egypt's anger at critical resolutions adopted in April by the Palestine National Council, but said he hoped relations would eventually be rectified.

There was no mention of any visit to Cairo soon by PLO leader Yasser Arafat.

Hikmat Al Masri of Nabulus said the PLO should select the Palestinian delegates to a peace conference.

Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij, a leading West Bank figure, quoted the Egyptian minister as saying the PLO had made a mistake by refusing to accept U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

The issue of Palestinian representation at a proposed peace conference, to be convened under U.N. auspices, was also a main theme of a meeting Mr. Abdul Meguid held earlier with Abba Eban, chairman of the Israeli parliament's foreign affairs and defence committee.

"I think that's the major problem," Mr. Eban said after the meeting. "I believe that American and Egyptian influence, together with Jordan, might be

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Mafrag project trains women to help themselves

By Ramia Attallah
Special to the Jordan Times

THERE has been a growing realisation among professionals in the social development field that it is more useful to train people to help themselves rather than allow them to passively receive help from others.

Due to the old traditional way of handling society's needs, social development has often been associated with "charity" that is provided to the needy at the will and convenience of the wealthy. But that seems to be changing.

Social development is now being viewed as an essential component of the overall development of the country — it is also being dealt with as such.

What is more is that development projects in themselves seem to be taking on a more professional approach. One such example is the Income Generation Project for Rural Women in Mafrag.

The project, established in August 1984, combines women's and rural development — two major components that fall in line with Jordan's 3rd Five Year Plan for Social and Economic Development.

As far as women in rural areas are concerned, the plan states that these women have "a variety of problems," one of which is "a low level of production-oriented skills."

The plan also states that as far as the occupational distribution of women goes, the production sector is one of the areas that employ the lowest number of women.

Ministry of Planning statistics indicate that the percentage of women working in production actually fell from 1.1 per cent in 1979 to 0.5 per cent in 1984.

The five year plan also refers to the need for measures that would increase the participation of women in the planning process at all levels. This, in turn, would enable them "to play a more effective role in decision-making." In essence, the Mafrag project deals with these major elements simultaneously: It trains rural women in management and production-oriented skills and employs them in the production sector making professional-wear uniforms.

The Mafrag project was designed as a project for women,

run by women. The idea was that in the initial stage, 25 unskilled women with no work experience would be trained to manage and operate a small-scale industrial sewing factory.

That much has already been done. The factory operates eight hours a day, six days a week. The management aspects of the project are handled by a woman specially trained for that task which includes inventory keeping, accounting and production control. Two other women have been trained to train and supervise the remaining women in the factory. One woman has also been trained as a designer.

Various parties have contributed financially in setting up this project. The Ministry of Labour and Social Development contributed \$9,000, while the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) contributed \$242,000. Catholic Relief Services (CRS), an American development organisation, which is also the executing agency for the project, matched the AID contribution in cash and in kind.

CRS has assigned a team of four people to run the Amman-based aspects of the project. The team includes the project director, a community development specialist, a marketer as well as a finance officer.

According to Aysar Akrawi, project director at CRS, this project was not easy to set up. It was started from scratch. "We had to design a syllabus for industrial sewing, which did not exist in the country," says Mrs. Akrawi. "The programmes that existed were for domestic sewing only."

The majority of the women chosen to work at the factory had not finished high school. Most of them had never worked before. According to the CRS community development specialist, Rula Qumei, it took tremendous time and effort to train the women to be professional workers.

Mrs. Akrawi told the Jordan Times that "teaching the women work discipline and professionalism required a rearrangement of their priorities."

At the beginning the women were not prepared to work long hours. "They thought they could skip work in order to attend a marriage," Mrs. Akrawi said. Later, however, they realised that if they do leave work not only will the production at the factory drop

but they will also lose their jobs.

The difficulty in that respect, according to Mrs. Akrawi, was in making the women accept the concept of being away from home and taking a full-time job. This is why the role of the CRS community development worker was invaluable to the project, says Mrs. Akrawi.

It took various house visits by a community development worker to explain to the women's families the importance of their daughter's work as well as the necessity to lend them support.

According to Ms. Qumei, the reward was in seeing the progress which the women showed. She adds that the women had to also learn that during work hours the production level is directly affected by their concentration on work and performance.

While this reporter was talking to Fatmeh, one of the women on the production line, the production supervisor came up, and in a rather professional and polite manner said "this discussion is really lowering Fatmeh's production level, and the production line depends on her performance. Shouldn't this wait until the break at 12 o'clock?"

According to Mrs. Akrawi one of the interesting features of the project is the balance it managed to strike between the social and technical training aspects on the one hand and the commercial and business aspects on the other. In its first phase (which started in 1984 and runs till the end of 1987) the project had to emphasise the training aspect at the expense of the commercial one. Efforts centered around teaching the women the value of time, of concentrating on their work, as well as the importance of collective performance.

In their technical training, the woman also had to learn the importance of quality control. At the beginning all this came at the expense of higher production, but the time and effort spent later paid off. The factory is now able to produce for a sophisticated market.

"We have now reached a point where training does not have to be at the expense of the business," says Mrs. Akrawi. By the end of this year, "we would have trained the women so that both the technical and social development aspects will be reduced and all the concentration will be on the commercial aspect," she adds.

The Mafrag-based operation has already reached a self-sustaining stage. This year the factory completed production for one of the largest contracts it was awarded — 14,500 pieces commissioned by the King Hussein Medical Centre. Previously, these garments were imported from American suppliers.

An equally interesting feature of the project is its ability to involve the workers at every stage of its operation. The women have a good understanding of management decisions and process involved in operating the project. They are informed of their production schedule on a daily basis and are constantly aware of the deadlines they have to meet. According to Mrs. Akrawi, that makes them realise that the survival of the project depends on their performance.

"Every single one of us takes the responsibility for producing what we have to produce," says Bayan, another woman on the production line. "We all take the initiative to work together and do our best."

Mrs. Akrawi adds that the women have come a long way in accepting their responsibilities as workers. Recently, for example, they were faced with a deadline for which they had not met the set production level, they automatically volunteered an extra hour from their time. They knew they had to do that in order to remain in the market.

Despite all this however, the project is not free of difficulties. One difficulty currently facing the project is that of keeping the women who get married to continue working at the factory. For those women marriage usually means taking on a new role as a wife and possibly as a mother. This is precisely where the influence of the family and the husband comes in. In that regard, the project aims at getting the community — the husband and family in particular — to appreciate the value of the woman's work, financially and otherwise.

As it relates to the business aspect of the project, women getting married implies a certain rate of employee turnover. That rate has averaged at 2.6 per cent for every six months. To counter that, two training programmes are set up so that those who leave can be replaced without affecting production.

More than 300 women have applied to work for the factory from the time the factory was established, Mrs. Akrawi recalls. To date, the factory remains the only industrial project which employs more than four people in Mafrag.

To ensure the continuity of the project, CRS would like at this point to extend the project for a further 18 months in order to turn it into a fully-fledged commercial business. If the expansion is approved, it will be done by adding more specialised equipment that would allow for the employment of 15 more women bringing the total number to 40.



Her Majesty Queen Noor during a visit to the Mafrag project in 1986. (Right) is Mrs. Aysar Akrawi, the project manager (File photo)

plays more than four people in Mafrag.

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By extending the project for a further 18 months and allowing for its complete commercialisation, CRS will guarantee that the criteria upon which the project is set remain as its core. Those criteria, according to Mrs. Akrawi, are that a profit-sharing model be applied; that the project continues to employ women and that it remains in Mafrag. Only then will the business be ready to be sold or handed over to either the private sector, a private voluntary organisation or a semi-official organisation which could maintain the set criteria for it.

It is precisely in its basic criteria and management model that the Mafrag project falls in line with development plans for Jordan: It trains rural women in production and management-oriented skills, employs them in the related field, bringing them directly into the economy. After all, the five year plan states that "social development is a basic foundation of economic development." According to Mrs. Akrawi, that is the very reason why the Mafrag project could well be a

model for other development efforts in the country.

Randa Habib's
Corner

Regrettable

THE Marj Al Hamam incident, during which eight people were injured following municipal elections, is most regrettable. Jordan, in the past few years, has witnessed many elections far more important than municipal elections without any shameful actions.

Police were able to control the situation and to put an end to the gunbattle, which started from a quarrel between competing factions, according to eyewitnesses. With 33 candidates for 11 seats on the municipal council, and 7,700 voters, I don't see how these elections could degenerate into such a mess.

What is more amazing is the fact that some of the combatants were "well educated" people with "high degrees." Even more, I was told, police had to reinforce their guard of the wounded at the King Hussein Medical Centre, as assailants were coming back to "give them a lesson" on their hospital beds. In the meantime, competitive groups were reorganising themselves for a new "battle." And if it was not for strict police measures a renewed battle might have erupted.

What we need after incidents like this is a full public debate that would and should expose the reasons and the attitudes behind such incidents. In many countries, "battles" like this are ridiculed in TV and on theatre. I would myself be pleased to produce a comedy on this.

A whiff of the 'High' life

Diana Smith looks at the gustatory habits of the Portuguese and comes up with a rather fishy story...

LISBON — "Would you take something to Lisbon for my friend?" asked a colleague in Madrid.

I carried the something shrouded in six layers of plastic and thick pink wrapping paper through the state halls of Madrid's Barajas airport. People sniffed the air — then gave me a wide berth. I queued in growing isolation for the security checks and was raced through by officers anxious to get me out of range as quickly as possible.

On the aircraft, the parcel and I sat alone. The cabin staff avoided us.

At Lisbon airport, a similar experience. Yet, when I called the recipient of the pink parcel and informed him I would drop it off on my way home, he exulted.

What could smell so bad and bring such bliss? What else but bacalhau? "Faithful friend," as the Portuguese call it: dried salt cod which in its uncooked state looks like... like... well, something very dead and putrefying and smells as it looks.

At the time I brought it from Madrid, there was a serious shortage of this staple of the Portuguese diet. To be its bearer from abroad gave one a special, if

odoriferous, status.

Now it is plentiful, although hideously expensive — from Esc500 (\$4) a kilogramme for the tough bottom-of-the-market sort, through Esc1,000 for a reasonable grade fit for your average bacalhau cakes, or shredded and blended with scrambled eggs, olives and onions and mince-chips, to Esc1,400 or more for the elite, moist, thick-fleshed monarch of the sea which goes into "spiritual bacalhau" steeped in cream for special occasions.

Twenty years ago it cost Esc17 a kilogramme, the equivalent of 10p (16 cents) a pound, and provided 62 per cent of the national diet.

Tall ships, blessed by the Archbishop of Milene, once sailed from the Tagus, bound for the Grand Banks of Newfoundland to fish for the huge cod there. Risking their lives in the heavy swell, the fishermen laboriously loaded their catch from tiny dories onto the decks of the graceful vessels.

Such colourfulness, however, was no match for latter 20th-century efficiency. The three-masted were replaced by trawlers. The Grand Banks continued to be the favoured location but,

increasingly, cod came under tough quotas from Canada or the North Atlantic Fisheries Organisation. Now, as member of a European Community in dispute with Canada over fishing, Portugal cannot fish for cod in Canada's exclusive economic zone. So it imports Canadian cod. And Icelandic cod and Norwegian cod. Portugal devours 50,000 tonnes a year of topped and tailed salted "green", that is uncured, cod.

From "green" to cured, the cod loses a third of its weight. The yellow-grey dried slabs soak for a day before cooking.

Then, the Portuguese who pine for their pungent old friend even if it costs a thousand times more than a generation ago, tuck into *Bacalhau a Bras*, a *gomes de sa* oven-baked, charcoal-grilled, boiled, mashed or minced — you name it; Portugal has as many ways of cooking as Heinz sauces.

Portuguese fishermen catch about 13,000 tonnes of cod in international North Atlantic water off the Grand Bank area — appropriately called the "nose bank" — or around Spitzbergen. They hope the EC will settle its dispute with Canada so they can be licensed to fish in Canadian waters, catching more and importing less — Financial Times feature.

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British home secretary urged not to extradite soccer hooligans

LONDON (AP) — Home Secretary Douglas Hurd was urged by legislators Tuesday not to extradite 26 soccer fans to Belgium where they face charges over the 1985 Heysel Stadium riot in which 39 people were killed.

Eight lawmakers, all from the supporters' Liverpool district in northwest England, argued the accused should stand trial in Britain.

The fans lost a House of Lords appeal last week against their extradition, demanded by the Belgian government.

Under British laws, the home secretary must make the final

decision.

Eric Heffer, a Labour Party legislator, said after a meeting that Hurd "said he has not made up his mind, and I actually believe him... he really did give the impression he is open to persuasion."

But David Alton of the Liberal Party said: "I do not think there will be a change of mind on

extradition." Alton said if 39 people had been killed in Liverpool football club's stadium, Labour lawmakers "would have been in the vanguard in demanding the extradition of those responsible."

The disaster happened before the kickoff between Liverpool and the Italian club Juventus of Turin in the European Soccer Cup final on May 29, 1985, when Liverpool fans charged the Italian fans.

The tragedy led to a ban by the International Football Association (FIFA) on English teams playing abroad.

Thoroughbred yearling market firms as Keeneland July auction ends

LEXINGTON, Kentucky (R) — The market for prime thoroughbred yearlings has firmed in the final session of the 44th annual Keeneland July Select Yearling Sale in a surprising price recovery from the weakness of the prior day.

Buyers at the world's most prestigious horse auction pushed gross sales to \$109,454,000 with winning bids averaging \$405,082 for 146 colts and fillies.

Prices at Tuesday's session marked a five per cent gain over comparable year-ago prices and a 20 per cent rise from Monday's average winning bids.

"People were relieved to see the market bounce back today after yesterday's gloom and doom," said Jim Williams, spokesman for the breeder-owned Keeneland Association.

"The market is apparently still going down, but the fall slowed from last year and the indication is there may not be too much decline in the future."

The average price for the two-day sale was off 9 per cent to \$371,030 from \$408,160, which was in line with some forecasts by thoroughbred market analysts.

The gross was up nearly \$5 million from last year's \$104.5 million but this was paid for 295 yearlings versus 256 last year.

The median price of \$275,000 was the same as last year's while the top price of \$3.7 million paid by Sheikh Mohammad Makh-toum of Dubai for a bay colt sired by 1964 Kentucky Derby winner Northern Dancer out of Secret Asset was \$100,000 more than last year's highest bid.

Winning bids by the Makh-

toum family totalled \$31.3 million this year, or 28.5 per cent of the gross.

The second highest price came from leading American trainer D. Wayne Lukas, who bid \$2.9 million for a bay colt by 1977 Triple Crown winner Seattle Slew out of Smart Angle.

Ten yearlings sold for \$1 million or more brought to 16 the total in that price range for the sale compared with 17 last year.

Some of Tuesday's heightened activity was attributed to several offspring of Northern Dancer being offered.

One of the world's leading sires, he is being retired from stud duties this year and a participant noted that "buyers went after them" when part of his last crop went under the hammer at the Keeneland Pavilion.

Cycle-ball show in the offing

AMMAN (J.T.) — World and European champions in artistic cycling and cycle-ball are due in Amman Friday to stage a world champions festival of cycling, scheduled to start Saturday morning at the Roman Amphitheatre.

The 19-member West German team of which 14 are players, will be headed by the secretary general of the Indoors Cycling Interna-

tional Commission (CIS), Mr. Hans Born.

Aerobic and artistic cycling as well as cycle-ball events will be the highlights of the show which is being sponsored by the Middle East Academy of Sports (MESA). The individual world champion in artistic cycling, Dieter Maute, will also stage performances during the show.



Dieter Maute... in action



HERE, BALL: Mohammad Shawahin, Palestine team striker (7), and Mameer Zino (6), Syrian Sibleh's defender, wait for the ball to come down during the sixth day of the Arab League Champions Championship held at Amman Stadium Wednesday. The two teams tied 2-2. In today's action, Al Faisali takes on Al Riyadh Wal Adab of Lebanon. The Iraqi army team leads the tourney with 4 points, followed by Al Faisali with 3.

Universiad casts doubt on Olympic ambitions

SEOUL (R) — South Korea's large team Tuesday returned home shamefaced from the World Student Games in Yugoslavia without a single gold medal — prompting criticism of the country's lofty ambitions for the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

The 122-strong team which competed in all 12 sports at the Universiad in Zagreb came back with just one silver and one bronze and placed 28th of the 129 participating nations.

Seoul newspapers said the poor performance brought shame and

shock to South Korea, which plans to make next year's Olympics a national showcase.

Commentators said many of the athletes sent to Zagreb were candidates for the Olympic squad yet their standards were far below those of the opposition.

South Korea won a total of 93 gold medals at the 1986 Asian Games in Seoul, one short of China's winning haul, raising high expectations of Olympic success.

Sports officials are on record as saying they aim to win between 10 and 15 gold medals next year,

and some trainers have been criticised for beating athletes during training out of eagerness to better their performance.

One of South Korea's sporting heroines, Lim Chun-Ae, recently spent time in hospital with a ruptured eardrum after her coach hit her for recording poor training times.

The elfin teenage runner, who won three track gold medals at the Asian Games, did not compete in Zagreb because she is still at school.

Man admits giving cocaine to basketball star

WASHINGTON (AP) — Brian Tribble, the man acquitted of supplying the cocaine that killed basketball star Len Bias, now says he took drugs with the all-American the morning he died.

But because Tribble has already been tried and didn't take the stand in his trial, the prosecutor in the case says he is free from any prosecution.

"It's a mistake I readily admit," Tribble, 25, said during an interview Monday with WJLA-TV in Washington. "I admit it truthfully and now, right here on camera."

Tribble was found innocent June 3 of cocaine distribution and possession.

Robert Bonsib, the assistant state attorney in Maryland who prosecuted the case, said Tuesday that the verdict frees Tribble from

further prosecution on those charges. Bonsib said that since Tribble never took the witness stand to proclaim his innocence, he also is free to say whatever he wants without committing perjury.

There are no further charges pending against Tribble.

"At this point he can admit to total involvement without any jeopardy of prosecution from this office," Bonsib said. "It's over."

Bias' teammates, Terry Long and David Gregg, testified during the trial that Tribble joined them in taking drugs with Bias in a

University of Maryland dormitory room on June 19, 1986, the morning the basketball star died.

They said the four were celebrating Bias' selection by the Boston Celtics with the second pick in the first round of the National Basketball Association (NBA) draft when Bias suddenly collapsed just after midnight.

Bias' death sparked an uproar at the university as Lefty Driesell, the basketball coach, and athletic director Dick Dull resigned, and the school tightened its enforcement of drug abuse.

Britain probing secret

payments in horse racing aides

LONDON (AP) — British tax investigators have interviewed

leading horse racing jockeys, trainers and owners in a probe of undeclared payments running into millions of pounds, the Times of London has reported.

It said among those seen were U.S. jockey Steve Cauthen, British champion jockey Pat Eddery and Willie Carson, who often rides for Queen Elizabeth II.

The Times said trainers interviewed included the country's most successful, Henry Cecil, and a number of Arab sheikhs. Carson and Cecil confirmed to reporters they were interviewed.

The Times described the probe as the biggest carried out in Britain into horse racing.

"The inquiry is part of a determined move by the authorities to end tax avoidance in a sport which has always existed on cash payments," the Times said.

By Peter Baratta
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — It all comes down to a matter of waiting. The course has been mapped out. The participants have registered their names. And with the exception of the typical last-minute details, preparations have been set for Friday's rally.

Now, for the drivers, organisers, sponsors and, yes, even the spectators, it simply comes down to enduring the seemingly endless suspense and pre-race butterflies waiting for the first car to shoot out of the starting gate.

And when that first car does roll off, it will usher in nine hours of low-speed drifts and high-speed carous, smooth asphalt roads and gruelling dirt trails, legal speed trails, and all-out sprints, clear skies and billowing dustclouds, cramped city streets and miles of open terrain.

It will usher in the 1987 Danish Jordanian Dairy Company Rally and all the excitement and pomp and circumstance that accompanies a national road rally.

Set to begin 10 a.m. Friday at the Royal Automobile Club (RAC) of Jordan's driver training centre, this rally has particular significance; if the current number one driver Hani Bisharat and his co-driver win the race, Bisharat will be crowned the 1987 Jordan rally champion.

But there are 27 other drivers gunning for the winner's circle and each one has a chance, using their knowledge, skill and a little luck, to take home the winner's trophy.

The 238-kilometre rally con-

sists of two-119 kilometre laps. The laps contain 71 kilometres of road stages on public roads, and 48 kilometres of "special stages" roads closed to normal motor vehicles, according to the rally press officer Samir Dajani.

The road stages connect the special stages. Each vehicle must reach the start of a special stage at an exact time, predetermined

FINAL ENTRY LIST

No. Driver	Co-driver	Car	C/G
1. Nabil Karam	Samir Rifai	Opel Manta 400	4/B
2. Hani Bisharat	Wafai Masis	Toyota Celica GT	3/S
3. H.R.H. Prince Abdullah	H.R.H. Prince Talal	Opel Manta 400	4/B
4. Khaled Dallal	Ali Al-Hamen	Nissan 240 RS	4/B
5. Moh'd Sbitan	Khader Al-Kassir	Nissan 240 RS	4/B
6. Haile Aguilur	Gonzalo Aguilur	Nissan 240 RS	3/B
7. George Khayyat	Hassan Sawalha	Nissan 240 RS	4/B
8. Haitham Mufti	Fawzi Alseddin	Daihatsu Charmant	2/S
9. Issa Halabi	Ziad Hamzeh	Toyota Corolla GT	2/A
10. Marouf Abu Samra	Bilal Shkadeif	Nissan 240 RS	4/B
11. Shehadeh Twa	Serge Telatipian	Mitsubishi Starion Turbo	4/B
12. Naser Bustami	Bashar Bustami	Nissan 240 RS	4/A
13. Zafer Abdeen	Mazen Dajani	Daihatsu Charmant	2/S
14. Moh'd Sha'ban	Sarena Sha'ban	Talbot Sunbeam TI	2/A
15. Maher Hattar	Fadel Abu Hamdan	Toyota Celica ST	2/S
16. Tareq Bilbeisi	Tawfiq Taji	Toyota Corolla GT	2/A
17. Marwan Naqul	Mumir Mousa	Toyota Corolla	2/A
18. Maurice Khoury	Hosam Abdeen	Daihatsu Charade	1/S
19. Leith Naber	Khaldoun Naber	V.W. Polo	1/S
20. Mohammed Bustami	Sufian Natour	Datsun 210	2/S
21. Ahmad Qomog	Khalil Naber	Toyota Celica GT	3/S
22. Elias Saba	Hani Issa	Opel Manta S	3/S
23. Alfred Shamoun	Philip Alam	Seat Ibiza	2/S
24. Mithqal Asfour	Nicola Billeh	Volvo 244 Turbo	4/S
25. Mahmoud Siyyam	Luzay Baghdadi	Fiat Uno Turbo	3/A
26. Jan Shamoun	Amjad Abdul Hadi	Opel Manta 200	
27. Rimom Fleifel	Riad Sammanoudi	Toyota Celica	3/A
28. Ahmad Daoud	Firas Nemri	Lada VFS	2/B
29. Moh'd Abdo Shammout	Moh'd Malkawi	Triumph TR7	1/S

finishes the first lap, they return to the RAC to service their car and then park it in the "park ferme" — the "closed park" where no one is allowed to touch the vehicles, Mr. Dajani said. The first team then wait for the other vehicles to finish the first lap.

The cars then embark on the second lap, with the order of starting determined by each team's performance on the first lap. The first car is scheduled to leave the RAC for the second lap at about 3:30 p.m., he said, adding that the last car is expected to return to the RAC from its second lap at about 6 p.m.

Rallying, once a privileged sport afforded only by the more affluent members of Jordanian society, is now a widely popular sport, open to any citizen possessing a Federation Internationale de L'Automobile (FIA) license, an eligible vehicle and money to cover the entry fee.

In the early 1960's before safety and competition become critical factors, participants usually entered rallies with the same car they drove to work each day, with the hubcaps removed and perhaps with the addition of racing stripes or spotlights for cosmetic effect.

The road rally enthusiast is certainly a special breed Dajani said, but what makes the drivers and navigators continue to compete is still a bit of a mystery.

"It's something you can't explain," he said smiling. "I always compare it with if you smoke and you try to give up smoking. 'It's very hard'."

"Rallying is the same, it's very hard to quit. When one of these days (someone will) have to retire, it will be very difficult for them, even to watch as a spectator," he said.

During the special stages, the teams drive their cars to the

ultimate speed limits to reach the end of the stage. The time spent by each team in all 14 special stages is added up and the team with the lowest overall time wins the rally, Mr. Dajani told the Jordan Times in an interview.

This year's course takes the drivers south of Amman towards the Queen Alia International Airport and will contain special stages on asphalt, gravel, dirt and sand, Mr. Dajani added.

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